

pleasing when they have a monastic character. But when a church is to be erected in the midst of rows of modern Italianized houses, it is for the ecclesiastical building to follow, not to give the prevailing character of the scene. In such a position, however rich and elegant the design, however pure the style, however perfect the execution of a Gothic edifice, its general effect is, to our feelings, completely destroyed by a want of harmony with the *genius loci*. Styles so distinct will no more combine in an architectural scene than in a single building; and there seems to us much incongruity, and even barbarism, in the introduction of a Gothic church among the horizontal cornices and Grecian peristyles of a modern street, as in the justly-ridiculed Palladian windows which pierce the west front of the rich Gothic cathedral of Milan, so much as there would be in placing a Grecian temple in the quadrangle of Trinity or of Christ Church.

In such cases not only is the advantage of assimilation, one of the principal elements of beauty, lost, but the dissimilarity of the objects brought into contact, and the discordant ideas they suggest, are destructive of the pleasurable effect either class of objects would produce by themselves, and a source of positive pain to the beholder.

In the erection, however, of a country residence, where the choice of a style is less fettered by the proximity of other buildings, associations of a more general and imaginative nature come into play, and dictate the adoption of the national or indigenous architecture. In this country, which is still rich in the possession of numerous specimens of buildings, both ecclesiastical and domestic, belonging to the earlier ages of its history, the *old English style*, in some of its varieties, is that which we consider specially appropriate to an English country residence. The village church always—often the parsonage—and usually the neighbouring farm-houses and cottages, partake in their several degrees of this character, and assist in determining its choice. The natural scenery around presents congenial images to the venerable grove, with its patriarchal rockery, and the ancient oaks spreading their broad arms over the lawns and glades of the feudal park. The local annals of the estate, of the site itself, or of the proprietor's family, combine to call for the employment of a style which is connected with so many pleasing recollections of our national history. The irregularity of outline which it admits, and indeed almost requires, allows of any arrangement of the apartments which fancy or comfort may suggest, and accommodates it to all the varied wants of modern life. Moreover, it is equally appropriate to every rank of habitation, from the princely palace, of which so valuable an illustration has been afforded in the recent magnificence of Windsor, down to the snug parsonage or humble cottage. And its intrinsic beauty and picturesque are thus increased and set off by the valuable qualities of harmony with the neighbouring buildings, fitness for all its possible purposes and historical and local association. In all these points it infinitely excels the classical styles. The symmetry and regularity of these interfere with the convenient disposition of modern apartments; their porticoes and colonnades shut out the light, unless made so shallow as to destroy the intended effect; nor, in our opinion, does their outline harmonize with the general character of the rural scenery of this country any more than their plans with its climate, or the ideas they recall with its history. To us, the Grecian temple appears as completely out of place in an English landscape, as would a cloistered abbey or feudal castle in the prairies of Kentucky or the Illinois.

(To be continued.)

RAILWAY TRAFFIC.—The following calculation of the last weekly returns of 44 railways, 1,576 miles in length, will, we believe, be of interest:—Number of passengers on 31 railways, 433,692; consequently the total for the week must be above 3,000,000. The receipts for passengers on 44 railways, 83,633*l.* 13*s.* 11*d.*; ditto for goods on 40 railways, 25,782*l.* 16*s.* 11*d.* total, 109,416*l.* 10*s.* 10*d.* This is an average of 6*½* pence per week. The traffic, therefore, is certainly at the rate of about four millions and a half a year, and carrying twenty millions of passengers. —*Herapath's Journal.*

METROPOLITAN ARCHITECTURE.

A STROLL ROUND THE BANK.

THE Bank is now nearly surrounded on every side by a cordon of lesser banks and public offices. Were Sir Robert Taylor, therefore, to return to life, and revisit this scene of his architectural exploits, he would find no trace whatever of his bank—at least not externally, and scarcely any of its locality, so completely has the latter been metamorphosed since his time. Nay, even Sir John Soane, though he would recognize his own building, still in *statu quo*, would fancy that it must have been transported to some very different and newer region of the town, for on looking around, he would perceive hardly one of his whilom architectural familiars and acquaintances now remaining. With the exception of the Mansion House—and that has been despoiled and deprived of its towering crest, the others have disappeared. The old Royal Exchange is gone, and its successor has marched forward midway of the principal front of the Bank, whose central portion is not likely to look more dignified by being seen in immediate proximity with Mr. Tite's loftier and more richly culminated portico.

St. Bartholomew's Church is no longer standing, but on its site has arisen the Sun Assurance-office. The church of St. Bennett Fink, close by, with its rather picturesque little dome, has shared a similar fate; and the French Protestant Church, which stood a little further eastward, has now migrated westward to St. Martin's-le-Grand, and has thereby made way for another building of widely different character and purpose—viz. the Commercial Hall, Threadneedle-street, which we will make the easternmost point of our present architectural perambulation, and set out from it accordingly.

Although of no very great extent—little more than 90 feet in width—this structure has a facade very far more monumental than usual in aspect; while it is simple almost to severity as a composition, it is more highly decorated in some respects than buildings far showier in design. It proclaims itself at the first glance to be exclusively for some public institution, exhibiting externally merely a ground floor, and is therefore very differently constructed from the majority of our public edifices of every other class than churches, from which last again it differs decidedly in its physiognomy. It is, in fact, so perfectly *suu generis* in this respect that we cannot point out any parallel instance in the metropolis; and what serves to enhance the peculiarity of its character is the circumstance of its being styler, or without columns or pilasters of any kind. Notwithstanding that there is a very unusual degree of decoration bestowed upon the frieze and cornice, which, however, we must confess, are not altogether so carefully studied as they deserve to have been, the frieze more especially, for the arabesque foliage is of rather stiff and poor design, and withal tends to destroy the keeping of the ensemble. Either embellishment should have been moderated there, or more of it should have been bestowed on the door and windows; and some base mouldings above the plinth or socle would have given to the lower extremity of the facade that degree of architectural marking and finish in which it is at present deficient. Matters of this kind may be thought very trifling, and scarcely worth notice, yet are they in reality very important, because attention to or disregard of them will occasion beauties or blemishes accordingly. Where the general idea is poor, minor defects more or less become of little moment; but the case is far otherwise when little faults appear in that which, but for them, might afford unmixed satisfaction. The most striking and characteristic feature, however, of this facade is the bas-relief, which claims notice not only for its own merit as a classical production of the chisel, but as being a very unusual piece of decoration in this country.

In Greece architecture and sculpture went almost uniformly hand in hand, but in our modern Grecian style, sculpture is so far from being considered a component element of architectural design, that it very rarely enters into it at all, and then to no great extent. It is indeed rather strange that those who are so rigidly exact as to enquiring with hair-breadth precision all the details of such parts as columns and mouldings, should nevertheless

make no scruple of omitting sculptural decoration altogether, without even attempting to supply its place by such as would be equivalent, or nearly so, in effect. When sculpture is introduced at all, it is generally upon too petty a scale, and distributed in such little patches as not to tell decidedly of itself, or make other impression than that attending the same quantity of mere enrichment. In this instance, however, the sculpture displays itself both markedly and distinctly, and has also claims to attention as a piece of art well worthy of examination. As to the interior of the edifice, all we can here find room to say is that it answers, and in some respects even exceeds, the promise made by the facade. It must indeed be owned that the entrance vestibule is little more than a mere lobby; but the great room, or hall, is a very spacious and noble apartment, lighted almost entirely from above, through three lanterns in the ceiling and semi-dome over a semicircular recess at the further end, which has Corinthian columns, of the order there are also some pilasters on the sides of the room. The chief objection to be made is, that, owing to the whole being of a nearly uniform white hue, there is a certain coldness and vacancy, and there seems to be a want of some positive colour on the walls, if only as much as would relieve and bring out the architectural forms.

In the Sun Assurance-office Mr. Cockerell has shown himself far more ambitious of novelty than is at all usual; and it accordingly runs to counter to ordinary examples and rules, that those who speak only by book can quietly set it down at once as being capricious and extravagant. We are disposed to treat it somewhat differently; not that we can, by any means, commend it in unqualified terms. While we give him full credit for the laudable attempt to break through the hacknosed routine of design, we think that, having determined to do so, he might have done it more decidedly; therefore, we are of opinion that, since the order is on so small a scale in proportion to the rest as to be in some measure secondary in the composition, the lower, which is also the principal mass, might with great propriety have been treated less in the style of a mere basement—at least as regards the first-floor windows. Though rather plain than otherwise in the style of its details, this lower portion of the edifice is somewhat deficient in simplicity, it consisting, if we may so express ourselves, of too many bits and patterns, so that it looks altogether too much like a series of experiments.

The adjoining building of the Alliance-office contrasts strongly with the preceding, for, so far from falling into Mr. Cockerell's errors, its architect does not appear to be in any danger at all of being seduced into conceits and fancies by his own imagination. Would it not sound too much like a bull, we should call this a singularly common-place design, belonging to what may not inaptly be termed the Della Crusca school of architecture. Intention of any kind has not been greatly tasked here; and as to its general physiognomy, this front looks, at first sight, almost like a repetition of one that was erected not very long before in the same neighbourhood—viz. that of the Western Centenary Hall, Bishopsgate-street; for the general disposition of both is precisely the same—an order with fluted Corinthian columns on a basement, and comprising two tiers of windows (five on each floor). In both instances, too, the centre compartment consists of four attached columns and a pediment above them. Differences in other respects there certainly are, and they are all in favour of the Bishopsgate-street building, because in that the basement is a degree better in character, the openings being arched; while in the Alliance Office they are no more than so many gaps, the spaces between them forming only upright piers, without other finish to them than a few coarse streakings by way of expressing rustication; whence, notwithstanding the solidity of the piers themselves, a most unfortunate expression of weak nestlike place, owing to there being not sufficient apparent support for the architrave or plinth of the basement, laid immediately on the piers. The bad effect of this is particularly observable in the centre opening, which is merely a wide square-headed gap, left as a passage through the basement to a sort of court and other buildings in the rear.